

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

NSC-10 L-03 RSR-01 /088 W
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P 281932Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1619

INFO AMCONSUL CALGARY UNN

AMCONSUL HALIFAX UNN

AMCONSUL MONTREAL UNN

AMCONSUL QUEBEC UNN

AMCONSUL ST JOHNS UNN

AMCONSUL TORONTO UNN

AMCONSUL VANCOUVER UNN

AMCONSUL WINNIPEG UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 2055

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CA

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT RECALL TO HANDLE RAIL STRIKE

REF: OTTAWA 2036

1. IN BRIEF PRESS STATEMENT TELEVISED AT 9:30 PM EDT
AUG 27 PRIMIN TRUDEAU ANNOUNCED THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD
BE RECONVENED THURSDAY, AUG 29, TO LEGISLATE END TO
NATIONAL RAIL STRIKE. ANNOUNCEMENT CAME AFTER LAST-
DITCH GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS FAILED TO PRODUCE SETTLEMENT
AUG 27.

2. RAIL SETTLEMENT AND/OR BACK-TO-WORK ORDER IS
EXPECTED TO CLEAR PARLIAMENT QUICKLY. HOWEVER,
PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE (PC) LEADER, ROBERT STANFIELD,
HAS ANNOUNCED HIS PARTY'S INTENTION TO FORCE DEBATE AND
VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON INFLATION AND FOOD COST ISSUE AS
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SOON AS RAIL SETTLEMENT IS LEGISLATED. NEW DEMOCRATIC

PARTY (NDP) LEADER LEWIS ISSUED STATEMENT EXPRESSING REGRET THAT "BAD FAITH" ON PART OF RAILWAYS MANAGEMENT HAD FORCED PARLIAMENT TO BE RECALLED. HE SAID PARLIAMENT SHOULD NOT CONFINE ITSELF TO RAILWAY DISPUTE BUT SHOULD ALSO DEAL WITH RISING COSTS.

3. COMMENT: AGREEMENT ON RAIL DISPUTE SHOULD BE REACHED FRIDAY, AUG 31, LEADING TO DEBATE ON COST OF LIVING, PROBABLY STARTING IMMEDIATELY AFTER LABOR DAY. GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION OR TAKE OTHER ACTION DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE PART OF NDP'S FOUR DEMANDS ISSUED AT CONCLUSION OF AUG 21 NDP CAUCUS (REFTEL). NDP, WHOSE SUPPORT IS VITAL TO GOVERNMENT, COULD BRING ABOUT GOVERNMENT'S DEFEAT IF SATISFACTORY LEGISLATION ON LIVING COST ISSUE IS NOT FORTHCOMING. NDP URBAN MPS ARE REPORTEDLY READY FOR SUCH CONFRONTATION. HOWEVER, NDP RURAL MPS ARE RELUCTANT TO GO INTO AN ELECTION ON BASIS OF FOOD COSTS BECAUSE THEIR FARM CONSTITUENTS ARE PLEASED WITH, AND PROFITING BY, RECENT FOOD COST DEVELOPMENTS. IN FACE OF THIS INTERNAL SPLIT, NDP IS PRESERVING ITS OPTIONS. ONE NDP LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT CHARACTERIZED THE IMPENDING SITUATION AS "ONE OF INTENSE BACKROOM BARGAINING" BETWEEN HIS PARTY AND THE LIBERALS. HE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT IF GOVERNMENT COULD BE AT ALL FORTHCOMING IN MEETING NDP DEMANDS, AN ACCOMMODATION ENSURING CONTINUED NDP SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT PROBABLY COULD BE REACHED. JOHNSON

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